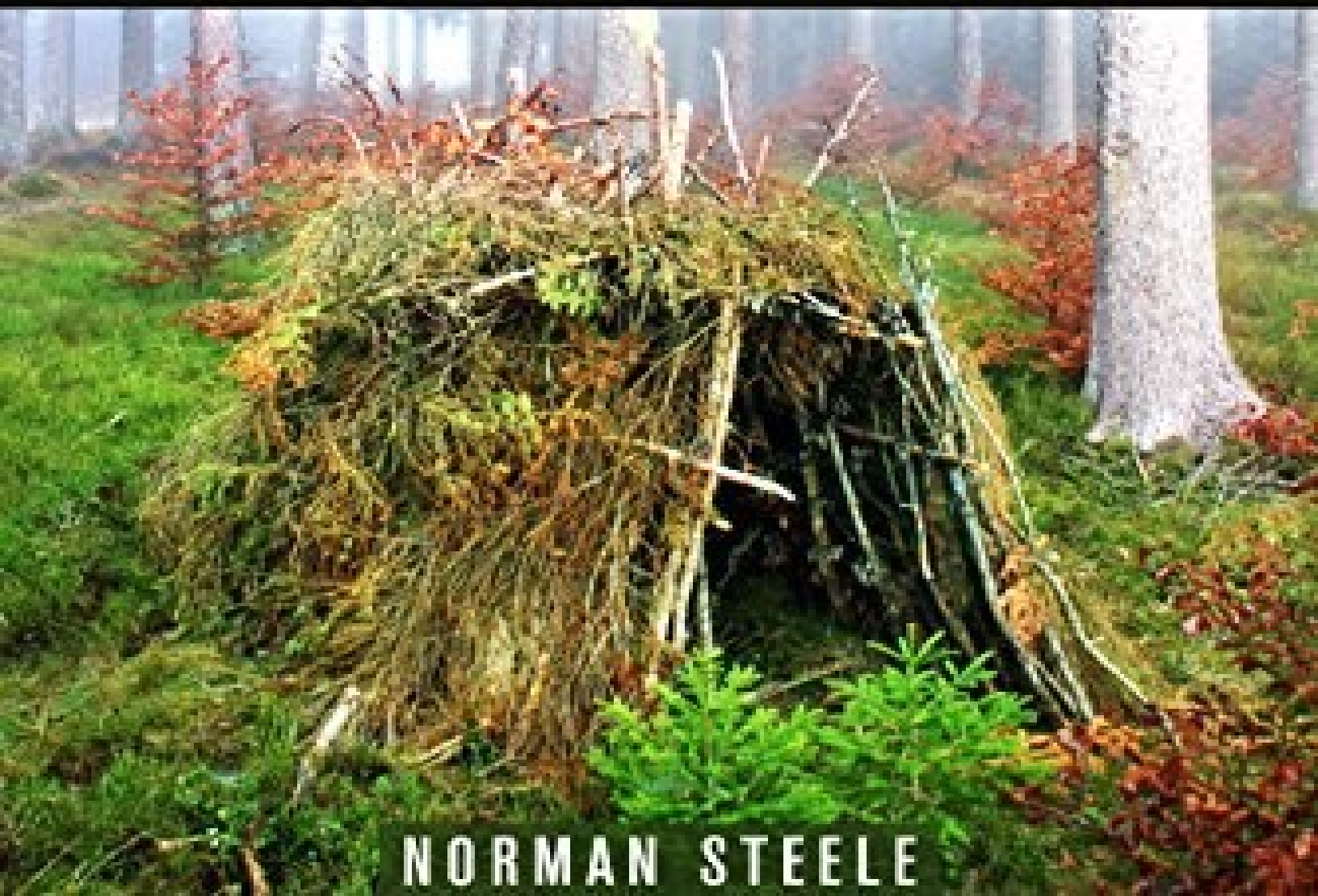


BUSHCRAFT **SURVIVAL SKILLS** FOR BEGINNERS

Simple **Tips and Fundamentals**
For **First-Time Adventurers**



NORMAN STEELE

Bushcraft Survival Skills for Beginners

Simple Tips and Fundamentals for First-Time Adventurers

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Introduction

As I write this, we are now fifteen years into the twenty-first century. The world is a different place than we once knew. When our parents and our parents were growing up, they had very little and almost every day was a challenge to survive.

Back fifty, sixty and even seventy years ago there was no such thing as the Internet, cell phones, food delivery services as well as services as welfare, food stamps and other forms of government assistance. In fact, if you were not strong enough to survive on your own you were led out to pasture and allowed to die.

With these modern conveniences, many of us have forgotten how to perform certain tasks. There are even a few people I personally know who would curl up in a ball and die if they got lost in the mall. This is why I decided to write this book. I personally feel that we need some basic skills in our lives. Now I don't expect you to be the next MacGyver or Captain Kirk and have the skills and knowledge to get yourselves out of any situation that you find yourself in but I do expect you to be able to go outside and come home safely.

In this book, I will explore the topic of bushcraft. In this book, we will talk about basic survival tools and techniques that you can use to survive in the wilderness. I believe that once you have an understanding of these skills you will be able to apply them to your day to day life and even help others to deal with situations that they may be presented with.

This is an introduction to this topic so there will be lots of room to go exploring and finding your own path. No matter what you do or in what direction you choose to travel this book will be the foundation to make sure you can do it safely and successfully.

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Chapter One: An Introduction to Bushcraft

The skills you have the more gear you need. This the unspoken motto of the bushcraft lifestyle. When we talk about bushcraft, we are talking about a way of living that allows you to use your skills and knowledge of the world around you to survive in any possible situation.

Overcoming Challenges

When you learn these skills, you are setting yourself up to overcome any challenge that you may come across. When we come across or are presented with challenges, many of us look for the easy way out or the solution that will keep our hands from getting dirty. Now I don't blame you if this is your mindset but this is a fact of our modern society. When you learn about bushcraft you are learning the skills to evaluate any situation find solutions and adapt to situations that don't go as planned.

Become More Self-Sufficient

When we learn these skills, we will learn to be more self-sufficient and to rely on ourselves more than others. Now there is nothing wrong with requesting and using the help of others. No one is an island, and the strongest of us need help every once and awhile. When you learn these skills, you will learn that you can rely on yourself and get through a problem if needed.

Building or Growing Confidence

We all need to be confident about what we do. We want to make sure that we don't look the fool in front of friends and family. When you learn the bushcraft ways, you building your confidence in many areas.

Increasing Your Survival Skills

Now many of us will not find ourselves lost in the woods at any point in our lives but there will be times that we will need to make decisions that could mean life or death either for ourselves or others. When you learn these skills, you are building your survival instinct as well as practicing what to do and in many cases what not to do. When you have an understanding of this, you can apply it to real life live or die situations with a greater chance of survival.

Can Handle Unforeseen Problems and Situations Better Than Others

In life, we will be faced with a right cross across the face. Now I am not saying someone will actually come up to you and punch you, but there will be situations that come up that will feel that way. For example someone you were close to suddenly dies or maybe your spouse comes up to you one day and says they want a divorce. No matter what the situation you can be better equipped to handle this when you learn these skills and the fundamental principals behind them.

Using Bushcraft

In the traditional world, bushcraft is focused on the wilderness and wilderness survival techniques. As I go through this book I will be focusing on the wilderness and how you can survive. As you read this book, however I want you to think about the actions that you take in your life. I want you to put yourself in a similar situation that you will find yourself in or have found yourself in. I want you to look at the tools and resources that you have around you and use them in productive and unique ways.

At the end of the day, it is all about survival. If you are surviving in a wooden wilderness filled with trees and wild animals or if you are living in a concrete wilderness filled with buildings, people and hidden dangers the outcome will be the same. We need to survive.

The 5 Fundamentals of Bushcraft

When it comes to bushcraft, there are five fundamental laws that you need to learn. These laws will help you to build your basic skills and apply them to your life.

The five skills that you will need to learn are as followed.

- Fire Building
- Food Foraging
- Shelter Building
- Trapping and Hunting Game
- Water Gathering and Purification

Fire Building

When you are in the wilderness or in a cold climate building a fire and knowing how to maintain, a fire could mean the difference between life or death. When we learn how to build fires, we will be able to use them for cooking food, supplying heat in cold climates as well as protection. When it comes to building a fire, you want to learn the basic foundation. What you want to do is start the base with your igniter. The igniter allows you to have a concentrated substance that will catch on fire and burn. Many people when starting a fire think that they can just light a few sticks or twigs on fire, and it will burn.

When it comes to starting a fire, you need to do it slowly. First off prepare your area of brush and debris. Then create a fire pit by digging a hole or building a base with rocks. If there is a log, nearby you can lay your sticks and twigs against that to build your base.

Once you have your base, you will want to ignite your igniter. Once this begins to smoke, you will want to carefully add small sticks and twigs to supply fuel for your fire.

One mistake many people make is adding too much to the fire and causing it to extinguish. You don't want to do this. You want to let the fire begin to grow. Don't be afraid of it just be cautious and understand that once it gets going it will start burning faster and faster.

Be careful to not smother your fire or build it to a point that it is out of control. When building fires you want to make sure that you keep water, sand and dirt nearby in order to extinguish your fire. Also, make sure to keep a burn kit with you just in case something goes wrong.

Food Foraging

When it comes to foraging for food, there are a lot of things that you can do. The first thing that you can learn to do is set traps. When you set traps, you can capture small

animals.

Now when setting traps you want to make sure that you are doing it in a safe way. What I mean by this is that you don't want to injure other animals that may get caught up in your traps as well as injure yourself.

The next thing you will want to do if you don't want to harm animals is to learn about the wild plants in the area. Now depending on the area you are in and the time of year you will be presented with a wide variety of different plants. Now I can't mention each possible plant that is good for you or is bad for you but here are some guidelines that you can follow.

Bad Plants

You can identify a bad plant if you see one or more of these characteristics.

Milky or discolored sap – When consuming a plant you will want to sap to be clean and clear. The sap should not have any kind of smell or bitter taste as well as not burn or discolor the skin.

Spines, fine hairs, or thorns – When you see these items on a plant it is a general indication that the plant is poisonous or will make you ill.

Beans, bulbs, or seeds inside pods – When you see these it is a general indicator that the plant is poisonous or only meant for animals.

Bitter or soapy taste – When plants have a bitter or soapy taste it is an indication that there are compounds in the plant that will cause issues with our digestive system as well as may cause rashes or other psychological effects.

Dill, carrot, parsnip, or parsley-like foliage

“Almond” scent in the woody parts and leaves

Grain heads with pink, purplish, or black spurs

Three-leaved growth pattern

Now of course I am not a botanist or a plant expert but the above are guidelines to follow when all else fails.

Plants That You Can Eat

When out in the wilderness you can eat the following plants. Now some of these plants will require you to boil or cook them in order to remove any impurities or possible poisons that may linger within the plant but they are a good source of food if stranded in the wilderness. Now this is a basic list, and you can go and explore further on the specifics of these plants, where they grow and how to consume them but this will get your research started.

- White Mustard (*Synapsis alba*)
- Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*)
- Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia*)
- Plantain (*Plantago*)
- Kelp (*Alaria esculenta*)
- Green Seaweed (*Ulva Lactuca*)
- Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*)
- Field Pennycress (*Thlaspi Vulgaris*)
- Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)
- Curled Dock (*Rumex Crispus*)
- Clovers (*Trifolium*)
- Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)
- Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)
- Cattail (*Typha*)

Now before you go out into your back yard and start eating the plants, I want you to go and get a book about wild plants and learn about them. Some plants are really tricky and may look exactly like a plant that you eat but may be very dangerous. So educate yourself before consuming any wild plants.

Shelter Building

When you are out in the wilderness or in unknown surroundings, you will have to make due with what is available for shelter. When out in the woods you may have wide open spaces to deal with. You will have animals, weather conditions and much more.

The most common and useful shelter that you can make is called a free standing or a debris hut. This is how you do it. First off, you need to have a support pole. The support pole should be as tall as you are plus an additional two arm's length long. So if you are six feet tall, the support pole needs to be 10 foot long. Now the reason for this is that you will need to lay down in the structure and you want to make sure that you have enough room for your gear as well as to ensure your legs and feet are well protected.

Next you will want to create some tripod connectors. What this is are two equally sized sticks or branches that you connect together to make a tepee shape. In the

middle of the V, you will need to place the support log of your shelter. You will need to make a support log for every two or three feet of your shelter.

From here you will want to start forming your base covering. You will do this with smaller twigs and sticks that will form a roof of your shelter. From there you will want to start gathering up leaves. You will want to start covering the shelter with as many leaves as possible. The rule of thumb is that the leaves on the shelter should be at least arm's length deep. If you don't have a deep enough covering of leaves, then any water can make its way through into your shelter.

The bed of your shelter is made the same way. You will gather leaves and lay them on the ground in your shelter. You will want to do one layer of leaves and then compact them down. Add another layer of leaves, compact them and then do it for a third and final time. When you do this, you are protecting yourself from the cold, wet ground as well as giving you a firm enough surface to lie on.



Above is a picture of a debris hut. There are many different variations that you can make but using the basic principals outlined you can make something that will protect you from the elements.

Trapping and Hunting Game

Now I touched on this a little when we talked about foraging for food but I am going to go into more detail here. When it comes to tracking and trapping animals, there is a lot that you need to learn and understand. There are many different books out there that will teach you about tracking and trapping food but here are some basics that you will want to learn.

The Area You Are In

You want to learn or recognize the area that you are in or learn about the area that you plan to travel to. In every area, there are special characteristics that make each area unique.

Plants and Trees – You want to learn about what plants and trees are in the area. You want to learn what plants are edible and what animals will eat them. You will want to

know what types of trees are around that can be made into shelters or homes for these animals.

Tracks – Every animal or creature that moves will make a track. You will need to learn how to recognize a track that these specific animals make. You will want to analyze the thoughts of the animals. Was that animal running, walking or standing still? Was that track made moments ago or weeks? What type of animal was it and are there tracks nearby that represent a predator to this animal?

These are just two of the many thoughts that need to go through your head when you start tracking animals. Once you know the animal that you are tracking you need to figure out the best way to trap the animal. Is the animal small enough that you can catch in a trap or do you need to create some weapon that will be used to kill the animal.

Once you know this you will need to know what to do to clean the animal, prepare it for consumption as well as how to cook the animal. When it comes to hunting, tracking and trapping you need to learn a lot of different skills. Skills that can't be taught in this book. Now that you have the basics and a foundation to explore you can build on your experiences and tailor your knowledge.

Gathering Water and Purification

When in the wild or wilderness water is one of the most important things that you will need. If you are in a rainy environment or if it rains you can catch water in our mouth to drink, but this is something that you can't rely on. So you will need to learn how to gather water and to ensure that it is pure water and not water that contains microbes or other items that will make you sick.

When gathering water, you can get it from some plants. When you cut open some plants, they will have water in their roots. You will want to make sure the water is clean, clear and does not have any bitter taste, is clear in color and does not burn the skin.

If you don't have any plants in the area that supply water, you will need to find a lake, river, pond, stream or another source. When you find this source the best way to purify the water is to boil it for about five minutes. After boiling the water, you need to allow it to cool before consuming it.

If possible make sure you have some form of the canteen with you to store the water. If you are planning a trip into the wilderness, they sell water purification tablets that will work in a pinch.

Bushcraft Intro Conclusion

In this chapter, we talked about the five fundamentals that go into the bushcraft lifestyle. In the next chapter, we will explore the tools that you will need and should have in a bushcraft survival kit.

Chapter Two: How to Build a Bushcraft Survival Kit

When it comes to camping, hiking, mountain climbing or even bushcraft there are specific tools that you will need to have in order to do what is needed. In this chapter, we will talk about the essential tools that you need to have in your bushcraft survival kit and some of the best tools to purchase.

Folding Knife

You will want to have a folding knife of some sort. With a folding knife, you can use it easier as a tool to whittle wood, use it to start sparks for a fire and in some cases use it to skin small and sometimes large animals. When purchasing your folding knife make sure that the locking mechanism of the blade is kept in excellent condition. You don't want it opening or closing at the wrong time causing injuries.

Fire Flash



Fire Flash is a great Swedish tool that when struck will cause sparks which will help ignite a fire. If you don't have or can't get fire flash, then you can carry some flint or other material that will cause a spark. You can carry matches or a lighter with you as well, but those can get wet or damaged. When you use something like fire flash, you can get it wet or break it and it will still work.

Sharpening Stone

When out in the wilderness you will rely on your knife a lot. You will want to make sure that it is working at peak efficiency. With this being said, you will want to carry a sharpening stone to ensure your knife will not fail.

Whistle

When traveling in the wilderness you may become lost or injured. Carrying a whistle will allow you to communicate long distances where your voice won't carry or if you can't speak for whatever reason.

Micro-Flashlight

You will want some form of a small flashlight or led light that you can use to shine on small areas and keep close to you at all times. When you have a small flashlight, you can put it in your mouth allowing you to keep your hands free.

Paracord

Paracord is an invaluable tool when it comes to bushcraft. Paracord can be used as a bowstring in a makeshift bow and arrow. It can be used as fishing line as well as used to aid in repairs to clothing and other gear. It can also be used to tie branches and sticks together for shelters.

Matches and Lighters

You will want to make sure that you have a few boxes of matches and lighters. You want to make sure that they are in good working condition and don't get wet. Matches and lighters are small and lightweight so carrying a few of them with you will be more of a benefit than a liability.

Tinder

When starting a fire, you will want to have something that will burn. Wax paper, old clothing and pieces of rubber are all good to start a fire as well as being lightweight and easy to carry.

Water Purification Tablets

When traveling in the wilderness you never know what will happen. You may fall and injure yourself as well as the need to consume more water than was originally anticipated. If your water supply is low or has been depleted then it needs to be replaced. The problem is that there are seldom clean sources of water. And even if there were you want to make sure. So carrying water purification tablets will ensure that whatever can't be seen won't hurt you.

Resealable Plastic Bags

Plastic bags have a wide variety of uses. You can use them to store water, food or other small items that you may find along the trail that may be of use to you. Make sure that you are for your bags for once they are ripped or torn they are of very little use.

Unlubricated Condoms

Now I am not talking about taking that little lady of yours out into the woods and having some fun; I am talking about using these as an emergency water source. When you have an unlubricated condom, you can store water in them for emergencies. Since they are strong and can stretch, you can hold a lot of water.

Fishing Kit

When in the wilderness you will have to live off the land. One of the easiest animals to catch will be a fish. To catch a fish, you will need a fishing kit that will consist of string, hooks, weights and lures. You can easily make a fishing pole from a stick or branch.

Sewing Kit

You will want to have a sewing kit that has a needle, thread, and some safety pins. You never know when you will rip a bag or a piece of clothing.

Compass

A compass is a very valuable piece of equipment. In fact, many experienced survivalists carry two compasses with them. A compass that they can keep in their shirt pocket and a button compass that they can carry for emergencies.

Survival Bag

A survival bag is a huge bag made out of plastic. When in the wilderness you can use this bag to get into as an emergency shelter or can be used as prevention for hyperthermia. Since the bag is made out of plastic, you can cut open the bag and use it as a lean through or even use it to help trap small animals. When in the wilderness having some plastic that size will be of tremendous advantage in many different situations.

Insect Repellant

When in the wilderness mosquitoes and other annoying insects are going to be a problem. Taking some insect repellant will be a welcomed addition to your kit.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is needed in any number of situations. You will need band-aids, bandages, rubbing alcohol, tweezers and even a small pair of scissors.

Selecting Your Equipment

When selecting your equipment, you will want to choose equipment that is modular as well as multipurpose. For example, you want a canteen that can serve as a cup, bowl, pot, and canteen. For your knife, you want one that will act as a knife, saw, fire starter and be able to cut through thick trees. You don't want to buy a cheap knife that will bend when cutting a tree.

Packing Your Kit

When packing your kit you want to pack it in a specific way. First off, you don't want to waste any space in your pack. You want to pack the larger items at the bottom. This will be your sleeping bundle and any spare clothing. Then you want to start filling in your bag.

When filling in your bag, you want to consider your center of gravity. You want the heavier objects at the bottom of the bag and lighter items packed around it. As you go higher and higher in your bag, you will want to start prioritizing your items. You want to pack the most used items towards the top in order to access them quickly and not having to repack your bag every time you need something.

Before venturing off into the wilderness make sure that you practice everything. Practice packing your bag, practice using your equipment and do your research on the food and wildlife in your area. The more knowledge that you have the more likely you will survive in the environment you are entering.

Best Practices & Common Mistakes

Do's

Plan Everything

You want to plan everything. You want to plan your route to the amount of food that you take medical supplies and navigation tools. If you are traveling out into the wilderness alone, you want to make sure that people can find you and know when to start looking for you if something goes wrong. You don't want to plan a trip for two days and suddenly decide to stay a week. If you plan on going off the grid then give them a grid area to search in case they need to find you.

Practice Everything

You want to practice everything from building shelters to purifying water to tracking animals. When you practice, you are gaining experience without involving extreme danger. When you practice, you also improve your skills and when confronted with a true survival situation you have a better chance of survival. Always remember even the best fail.

Experiment with Different Tools

Not every piece of equipment will be of use in this field. Some people will feel more comfortable with one type of knife over another. One backpack may be too clunky for one person but perfect for the next. No matter what it is, you want to find what fits for you and your situation. Never jump into buying the hottest item in the trade. Go out there and test them for yourself.

Don'ts

Travel Without Shelter

One of the biggest mistakes people do when traveling in the woods or wilderness is not having or knowing how to create a shelter. A shelter can mean the difference between life and death. If possible travel with a tent or at least something that can be turned into a lean-to or canapé. Learn how to make a debris shelter or something along those lines. It doesn't have to be pretty it just has to work.

Always Bring Navigation Tools

When entering into an unknown area you should always carry a map, compass, and even a GPS system. When traveling at least have two of these devices with you at all times. Also, bring a cell phone, walkie-talkie, and even a flare gun. You never know when you need to show someone where you are.

Eat Anything You Don't Recognize

When traveling you may get hungry and sometimes even resort to desperation. You never just want to eat something that looks good or smells good. There are always hidden dangers in the foods that we see in the wilderness. If you come across something that you are unsure of, don't eat it. There will be plenty of food around if you just go exploring.

Conclusion

When it comes to bushcraft, it all comes down to learning about the world around you. When you enter into these worlds, you need to understand it more than it understands you.

When entering into this environment you want to carry as much as you possibly can and make it as compact and light as you possibly can. You want to learn about the environment you are about to enter. Ask yourself questions like:

- What animals live here?
- What types of plants grow here?
- What from the environment can I use to build a shelter?
- What can I carry with me that may be of use later?
- What can I use to mark a path, so I don't get lost?

You always want to be constantly asking yourself questions and coming up with answers that think outside the box. When learning this craft don't forget to practice what you learned over and over. Make sure that the equipment that you are carrying is in professional working order.

At any moment, you could be staring death in the face. Well maybe that is an exaggeration but you need to think like that at times. You are entering into an environment that is untamed and has creatures who only thought is survival.

I want to thank you for taking this time to learn about bushcraft and everything that it contains. From this point further I want you to go and explore as much as you can and see in what direction it takes you. It was my hope in writing this book to give you a foundation of everything that is involved and what you can expect as you continue your education.

From this point forward I want to wish you all the best and hope that the adventures that you are about to experience create lasting memories.

To your success in everything you do.